

ROCKVILLE/SPRINGDALE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
P.O. Box 159
Springdale, UT 84767
December 18, 2013
Firehouse

BUDGET HEARINGS

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** – Chair Bob Orton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the following members of the Rockville/Springdale Fire Protection District Board present: Michael Plyler, Linda Brinkley, Nancy Sanchez, and Barry Rhodes. Also present was Chief Joe Barker. Elaine Harris recording.
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Nancy Sanchez moved the agenda be approved. Michael Plyler seconded the motion and all those present voted in favor of the motion.
3. **PUBLIC HEARING FOR PUBLIC INPUT REGARDING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE 2013 BUDGET** – Linda Brinkley moved the Board go into Public Hearing for public input regarding proposed amendments to the 2013 budget. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

Adrian Player, member of the Springdale Town Council and resident of Springdale, commented he understood there was going to be a raise in the fire protection fee and he supports that. He supported the last one, but was sorry the Board didn't increase the fee 10% per year from the last raise; it would have made it less painful this time. He knows the District does a good job and supports it 100%.

Dan Mabbutt asked the Board to cover the basics of what the public hearing was about so he could have a record. Chair Orton responded this public hearing was about the amendments that are needed for the 2013 budget. Mr. Mabbutt asked for a summarization of the high points. Chair Orton referred to the copy of the proposed amendments that is available.

Joe Pitti, resident of Springdale, stated part of the problem is the information was not on the website. He just received an e-mail this morning. He would prefer, much like is done with the Springdale Planning Commission, some synopsis of what the amendments are so they can have a full understanding about what is being proposed. The resources were not available for review. He could have obtained the information from the clerk, but was unaware of the meeting until receiving the e-mail this day. The Clerk stated the hearing notice was placed on Springdale's website seven days ago and the agenda was posted on the same website the previous Monday. Mr. Pitti stated not everybody checks the website every time and it is nice to have a synopsis of what is being presented.

Chair Orton explained that many items on the budget are projected when the budget is first created, but throughout the year, those projected figures can change and the State requires amendments be made to account for any increases or decreases in the budget before the end of the year. The largest changes were the lease/purchase of the new ambulance, which is reflected in both the revenues and expenditures.

Dan Mabbutt asked for clarification. Mr. Mabbutt stated that Adrian said he supported the previous increase and supports this increase and it might be a little painful; what was Adrian talking about? Chief Barker responded that this public hearing was not for a proposed increase in the assessment. Michael Plyler added that the increase would not be addressed at any time during this meeting. Chair Orton stated we will be dealing with the proposed increase next year.

John Callahan commented that he was concerned about the notice the public received. He suggested the Board entertain delaying this hearing so the public can prepare better for a comment period. Chair Orton responded that, other than going door-to-door, how Mr. Callahan felt better notice could be given.

Karla Player stated she gets notices on a regular basis from Fay Cope, Town of Springdale, regarding Springdale's Planning Commission and Town Council. Karla considers the Fire Board to be important and do a great job as volunteers. She had just heard today that the assessment fee was going to be doubled; that is why she was here. She received an e-mail from Lisa Zumpf regarding this meeting and it is not what she expected. Karla suggested having Fay Cope put the meeting out on her e-mail list. The Clerk does notify the Town of Springdale and they put it on their website. They do know we are having a meeting. A few years ago, the District requested property owners provide their e-mail addresses so a notification list could be provided. Three people responded and over the years, those addresses have eventually been returned as not valid. She would be glad to create another list. Karla felt it would be helpful if the information could be made available in a more timely manner.

Dan Mabbutt stated that he started a website specifically for the purpose of attempting to facilitate communication throughout the canyon community and offered that website for a summarization of what the Board is doing or planning on doing in a more user friendly and meaningful way.

Michael Plyler stated that, simply, the 2013 budget had an approved figure for each line item and there are 100+ line items. Whatever figure we budgeted for that line item may not be accurate at the end of the year due to the fact that more or less was spent. When we get to the end of the year, the budget has to balance; therefore, amendments are made to accomplish that. All the bolded figures on the copy the audience has are the ones that are being proposed for amendment.

Dan Mabbutt stated many of those in attendance had an incorrect impression about the purpose of this meeting. The Board concurred that was a fair statement.

Phil Anderson was a little perplexed by the copy provided. He questioned the increases/decreases compared to last year, which indicated a loss of approximately \$56,000. He felt there was pretty big jumps and wondered if the District wasn't growing too fast. Chair Orton explained that the Fire Chief has resigned and that action necessitated having firefighters available on-call from 5:00 pm to 8:00 am. on weekdays and 24/hr. coverage for weekends for an hourly wage. Chair Orton explained the addition, within the building, of two rooms to accommodate that staff. This change resulted in the need for more expenditures during the last two months of 2013. This added expenditure for 2013 will be paid from our reserves.

Luci Francis, resident of Rockville, stated the experience she has had with the Fire Department indicates that there is a need for increased fees to keep our men safe, to keep them properly equipped with the equipment they need, In the two towns where there are rocks and a river, there is a potential for the need of this service. She fully supports whatever needs to happen with the department to ensure the safety of the men that have given their time as volunteers for several years. This protection is worth the cost.

Dan Mabbutt stated that, now that he understands the issue, he would like to support Adrian's statement.

Adrian Plyler clarified that the line item “Standby Fees” is the assessment to the residents and questioned why it went down for 2014. Michael Plyler responded there has to be a procedure in order to raise the fees, so it cannot be put into the budget until it is approved.

Michael Plyler explained the necessity of having people on call instead of having to come from Hurricane.

Linda Brinkley stated we don’t have the local volunteers that we had many years ago. We have to supplement with people who don’t live in the canyon but do work here and their employers allow them to leave in case of a fire.

Phil Anderson voiced his concern regarding the large amount of money that was spent on a new ambulance; he did not think that was necessary. He knew it was going to impact the budget and the assessment rates even though he was told otherwise at another meeting. He agrees with spending the money but doesn’t want to run the situation like there is an endless pot of money. The issue of more on-call people and that cost should have been factored in when the decision was made to purchase a new, equipped ambulance. He doesn’t remember a public hearing on that purchase. The taxpayer is constantly being hit by everybody; now the Board is talking about an increase. You can play the fear factor of your house burning down to get an increase in rates. The Board has to justify better what they are doing. He doesn’t feel there was justification for the ambulance purchase, but that is history. Now we don’t have enough money for firefighters.

John Callahan was informed this was only a public hearing on these proposed amendments. There will be another meeting on December 30, 2013 to approve them.

Louise Excell stated she served on the District Board for many years and she knows what they do and has also served on the Springdale Town Council for 12 years. She explained that the only thing the Board is doing is making sure their budget balances, which is required by the State.

4. **ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING** – Linda Brinkley moved the Board leave the Public Hearing. Nancy Sanchez seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.
5. **PUBLIC HEARING FOR PUBLIC INPUT REGARDING THE PROPOSED 2014 BUDGET**
– Michael Plyler moved the Board go into Public Hearing for public input regarding the proposed 2013 budget. Barry Rhodes seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

Louise Excell asked how two on-call individuals are going to be able to manage a full-scale structure fire or large brush fire. Discussion took place on how the on-call personnel will respond and where additional assistance will come from. The two, on-call personnel will be the first responders.

Louise agreed with the previous input that perhaps we do need to raise our rates. The monetary payback is in the savings on insurance. It is even a bigger benefit for businesses. There are a lot of things she has to pay for that she, personally, disagrees with, but is more than willing to pay for fire and EMS protection.

Chair Orton stated the Board will probably be looking for some volunteers for a committee to do a long-range plan and come up with some solution and scale for the increase.

Joe Pitti asked about the renting of rooms from the Zion Park Inn for the firefighters and received confirmation that was only temporary until the new rooms are completed.

6. **ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING** – Nancy Sanchez moved the Board leave the Public Hearing. Linda Brinkley seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.
7. **ANY DISCUSSION REQUIRED AS A RESULT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE PROPOSED BUDGET** – No discussion required.
8. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE INTERIM STATUS OF CHIEF JOE BARKER** – Chair Orton thanked Chief Barker for the job he has done during the last two months. The coordination for response to the rock fall incident in Rockville was incredible. Chair Orton proposed that, until the Board can get the budget and long-term plan figured out, we need to keep Joe Barker in as interim Fire Chief for 2014, at least. A decision will need to be made if the District needs a full-time Fire Chief or if we will continue with a part-time. Michael Plyler supported Chair Orton's remarks regarding the good job Chief Barker has done to this point and one of the problems we have in getting firefighters is, as more retirees move in and less people with children, we have no young people to volunteer. Somehow, Joe was able to get four new people on the roster, two of which are local.

Linda Brinkley moved the District continue to employ Joe Baker as interim Fire Chief for the year 2014. Michael Plyler seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

Chair Orton stated that he felt the District had burned out Ryan Ballard and didn't move fast enough in the direction we are now headed. We don't want to do that with Joe or anyone else. We depended on Ryan too much and took him for granted. We owe Ryan a great debt of gratitude.

9. **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT – FIRE SERVICE**

- a. Report on fire activity since the last Board meeting – Chief Barker reported that since the Board's last meeting, there have been two calls – a head-on collision during the snowstorm and the rock fall incident in Rockville.
- b. Consideration and possible approval of applicants for the Fire service – There have been no new applications.
- c. Training update – Firefighter I and II certifications are still on schedule for sometime in January. Two-day extrication will be January 12 and 13 all day and will be given by the interagency of the Park and L.N. Curtis.
- d. New business to include requests for budgeted expenditures – There were no new budgeted expenditures. The proposed recycling program has not been finalized and there were no updates on the landscaping for the firehouse.

Due to the holidays, the rooms will not be completed until after the holidays – first of January.

10. **FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT** – Chief Barker has received a bid from Todd Hobein relevant to the plan review changes proposed by the Town of Springdale. Todd Hobein's fees are the same as Marshal Barker's.
11. **FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT – AMBULANCE SERVICE**
 - a. Report on EMS activity since the last board meeting – Chief Barker reported there were six calls, two of which were transports.
 - b. Consideration and possible approval of applicants for the EMS service – There were no new applications.
 - c. Training update – Since the last meeting, the EMS has trained extensively on the new airway bags.
 - d. New business to include requests for budgeted expenditures – There were no new budget requests.
12. **STANDBY FEE BILLING REPORT TO INCLUDE UPDATE AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS** – As of the end of November, there was \$10,800.77 which was 120 days past due, an increase of \$3,589.28. The total past due as of the end of November is down by \$100. There has been \$5,300.00 received from the collections through property taxes.
13. **CLERK'S REPORT**
 - a. Account balances – There were no questions.
 - b. Ambulance accounts receivable report to include action on any requests for an adjustment in charges – As of the end of November, the accounts receivable was \$57,966.91, a decrease of \$10,813.02.

There was a request for consideration of the balance due on an ambulance account. The Board concurred to write-off ½ of the expenses (\$170.00) that weren't covered by insurance due to financial hardship. Discussion took place regarding how these charges relate to the recent authorization we gave for the write-off of disposable supplies not covered by Medicare.
 - c. Approval of expenditures for November 2013 – Michael Plyler moved the expenditures for the month of November be approved. Nancy Sanchez seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.
14. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 27, 2013 REGULAR MEETING** – Michael Plyler moved the minutes for the November 27, 2013 regular meeting be approved. Linda Brinkley seconded the motion and a roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

15. **GENERAL BOARD DISCUSSION** – Linda Brinkley expressed her appreciation for the department extending the light parade to Rockville for those that are unable to go to Springdale to watch it.

Michael Plyler and Chief Barker thanked Dillon Tomky for his service, especially during the last month and half due to a shortage of personnel for the night on-call shifts.

16. **IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES FOR FUTURE AGENDAS** – There will be a special meeting on December 30, 2013 to approve the 2013 budget amendments and the final 2014 budget.
17. **ADJOURN** – Linda Brinkley moved the meeting be adjourned. Nancy Sanchez seconded the motion. A roll call vote indicated all those present voted in favor of the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Minutes typed by:

Elaine M. Harris
District Clerk

APPROVED:

Robert W. Orton
Robert W. Orton, Chairman